

Newcastle 2030



State of the City Report

Measuring progress towards our vision for a smart, liveable and sustainable city

Production

Newcastle Community Strategic Plan
was prepared by The City of Newcastle Future City Group

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Introduction

The State of the City Report provides an update on the progress towards achieving our shared vision as described in the Newcastle 2030 Community Strategic Plan. It outlines how Council and other stakeholders have responded over the past year to the strategic objectives identified in the Community Strategic Plan and the progress made towards achieving our long-term community goals.

This report is a requirement under the *Local Government Act 1993* and is part of Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. It is the first report tracking our progress since the community and Council endorsed the Newcastle 2030 Community Strategic Plan in March 2011. As such it will act as a baseline document for future reports.

Measuring our Progress

In order to measure progress towards the Newcastle 2030 vision a number of community indicators have been developed under each of the seven strategic directions. The indicators were shaped by the outcomes desired by the community and selected as a way of tracking the impact of initiatives undertaken across the local government area (LGA).

Each indicator is measured using data collected by Council, government or community based agencies. Analysis of the indicators will assist in understanding how effectively we are all contributing to positive change within our community.

The State of the City report is a living document providing an overview of the community indicators and progress achieved. While the most current data available was used to inform the preparation of this report, it is also acknowledged that there can be a considerable lag time in data availability for some indicators.

An assessment of the current trend has been provided for each indicator

- ➔ Progressing towards community outcome
- ⊖ No observable trend / Data not available
- ➔ Moving away from community outcome



Newcastle 2030 Community Strategic Plan

The Newcastle 2030 Community Strategic Plan was developed following a significant shared planning process with direct input from a wide cross-section of the community. It seeks to build on our strengths and unique assets, and describes our shared long-term vision for a resilient city that is smart, liveable and sustainable.

Reflecting the shared priorities of the Newcastle community, the Newcastle 2030 Community Strategic Plan is a guide to inform policies and actions throughout the local government area. It identifies 23 objectives to be achieved in the next 10 years across seven key strategic directions:

- A connected city
- A protected and enhanced environment
- Vibrant and activated public places
- A caring and inclusive community
- A liveable and distinctive built environment
- A smart and innovative city
- Open and collaborative leadership.

Achieving these objectives requires the involvement and partnerships of government at all three levels, the business sector, community groups and residents. Key strategies are also supported by the NSW 2021 State Plan and associated local regional action plans.

Successful implementation will ensure that the community's economic, social and environmental considerations are integrated into decision-making processes, and that sustainable outcomes are achieved through balancing the short and long-term needs of government, the business sector, community groups, residents and visitors.

Our vision

In 2030 Newcastle will be a Smart, Liveable and Sustainable city.

We will celebrate our unique city and protect our natural assets. We will build resilience in the face of future challenges and encourage innovation and creativity. As an inclusive community, we will embrace new residents and foster a culture of care. We will be a leading lifestyle city with vibrant public places, connected transport networks and a distinctive built environment. As we make our way towards 2030, we will achieve all this within a framework of open and collaborative leadership.

Delivering the Plan

In delivering the Community Strategic Plan, Council commits to its responsibility for key areas of the plan and continues to advocate on behalf of the Newcastle community in areas not directly resourced by Council.

The City of Newcastle's four-year Delivery Program and one-year Operational Plan identify the major projects, programs and services that Council is undertaking to help achieve the shared objectives for Newcastle. Resourcing strategies including a Long-Term Financial Plan, Workforce Management Plan and Strategic Asset Management Plan have also been developed to support operational works and key projects over the next 10 years.

These are key elements of Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.



Nine major civic projects aligned to the Newcastle 2030 Community Strategic Plan will deliver city and economic revitalisation over the next 10 years. Future State of the City reports will include updates on these key projects which are funded by a special rate variation and helping to achieve the seven community strategic directions.

Community Strategic Plan Strategic Directions							
Civic Project	Connected City	Protected and Enhanced Environment	Vibrant and Activated Public Places	Caring and Inclusive Community	Liveable and Distinctive Built Environment	Smart and Innovative City	Open and Collaborative Leadership
Hunter Street revitalisation	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Coastal revitalisation		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Libraries upgrade program			✓	✓		✓	
Swimming pool upgrade program			✓	✓			
On-street parking strategy	✓				✓	✓	✓
Off-street parking strategy	✓				✓	✓	✓
Newcastle Art Gallery expansion			✓	✓		✓	
Cycleways program	✓	✓		✓	✓		
Blackbutt Reserve upgrade		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	



Connected City

In 2030 our transport networks and services will be well connected and convenient. Walking, cycling and public transport will be viable options for getting around the city.

Community Outcomes

Community outcomes we want to see in our Connected City include a higher use of public transport, with public transport being a valid alternative to driving cars and contributing to a reduction in greenhouse emissions and congestion. Supporting the use of public transport will be the integration of pedestrian paths and cycleways with improved safety and positive health outcomes.

To achieve these outcomes over the next 10 years our strategic objectives for Newcastle are:

- Effective and integrated public transport
- Linked networks of cycle and pedestrian paths
- A transport network that encourages energy and resource efficiency.

Making Progress

Transport was a major theme throughout the Newcastle 2030 consultation process. The ability to walk and cycle safely on an integrated network is important in supporting an active and healthy lifestyle. As a community we want to see a highly inter-connected system of pedestrian and bicycle paths supported by appropriate 'end of trip' facilities and infrastructure on trains and buses for bikes. These outcomes will be progressed through the Newcastle Cycling Strategy and Action Plan, which was adopted by Council on 6 March 2012.

The Action Plan includes actions relating to cycling infrastructure, education, advocacy, promotion and monitoring. It aims to increase cycling participation in Newcastle to 5% mode share for all short trips, which is consistent with the NSW BikePlan mode share target. Monitoring of cycling participation will be facilitated by Council through ongoing support of the Super Tuesday bike survey.

Completion of key regional routes, such as the Wallsend-Glendale shared pathway, will encourage greater participation in cycling. Officially opened 1 June 2012, the pathway was a joint initiative funded by Roads and Maritime Services, The City of Newcastle and Lake Macquarie City Council. Originally proposed as a strategic route for recreational and transport cycling in the 1996 Newcastle-Lake Macquarie Bike Plan, the 3.65km path provides connecting bike routes between Lake Macquarie, Glendale, the John Hunter Hospital, the University of Newcastle, various TAFE campuses and Newcastle.

The Cycleways Program is one of the nine civic projects to be funded over the next 10 years through Council's special rate variation.

Council continues to advocate for the preparation of a regional transport plan and for the integration of land use and transport planning. The State Government is currently preparing a long-term transport masterplan for NSW that is expected to be released at the end of 2012. Transport for NSW has

indicated this will be followed by preparation of regional plans. The Lower Hunter Regional Strategy is also currently being reviewed by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure.

Public transport facilities in the city are being enhanced under a new tender for the provision of shelters with advertising. These improvements were identified in Council's audit of transport stops to ascertain works required to meet the Commonwealth Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport.



Electric Vehicles

Electric vehicles are being trialled in Newcastle as an emerging alternative to petrol-fuelled and hybrid cars. The trial is part of the Smart Grid, Smart City program being run by Ausgrid in conjunction with the Australian Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism.

The trial aims to assess the potential benefits of electric vehicles that are anticipated to include reduced greenhouse gas emissions, better air quality and less street noise. The impact of electric vehicles on the energy network will also be assessed and technical solutions investigated such as charging requirements and the installation of public and private charge points.

Electric vehicle infrastructure and charging points have been installed in the city and Council has successfully trialled one of the Smart Grid, Smart City electric vehicles over the past 12 months. Find out more at www.smartgridsmartcity.com.au.

Community Indicator	Progress	Trend
Use of public transport in Newcastle	4% mode share to public transport for trips to work (2006 Census)	⊖ 2011 Census data not yet available
Adequacy of available public transport	41% of residents agreed there is enough public transport in Newcastle (2008 Council Community Survey)	⊖ Data not available 2012
Use of bicycles for transport	2% mode share to bike for trips to work (2006 Census)	⊖ 2011 Census data not yet available
Registered electric vehicles	Estimated 20 registered electric vehicles in the Newcastle area	⊕

⊕ Progressing towards community outcome; ⊖ No observable trend; ⊖ Moving away from community outcome.



A Protected and Enhanced Environment

In 2030 our unique environment will be understood, maintained and protected.

Community Outcomes

Community outcomes we want to see in our Protected and Enhanced Environment include the protection of biodiversity, maintenance of bushland and urban forest and appropriate access to natural areas. We want reduced waste generation, sustainable use of water, improved air quality and increased use of renewables. Our vulnerability to climate change will be reduced and we will increase our preparedness for potential risks.

To achieve these outcomes over the next 10 years our strategic objectives for Newcastle are:

- Greater efficiency in the use of resources
- Our unique natural environment is maintained, enhanced and connected
- Environment and climate change risks and impacts are understood and managed.

Making Progress

In the past 12 months Council has continued with a range of initiatives to improve the environment and reduce our impact. Environmental rehabilitation and restoration works have continued along the estuary and ocean foreshore, local waterways, wetlands and bushlands. Such work typically consists of stormwater improvement activities, bed and bank stabilisation, weed management, revegetation, mulching, monitoring and education.

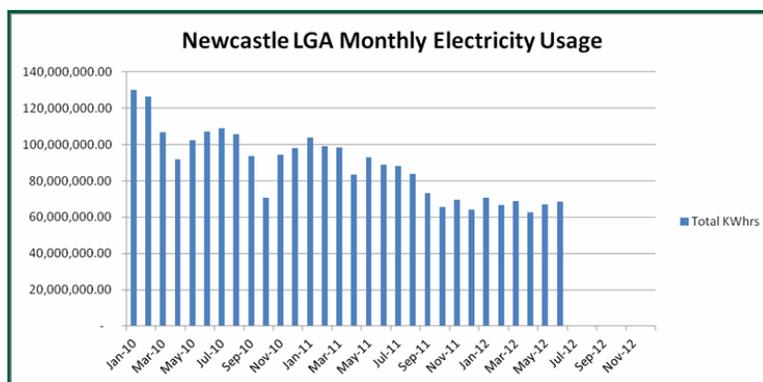
A key achievement has been the identification and management of the significant environmental weed *Caboomba* at Beresfield Golf Course, one of the first records of the weed in our region and one which has significant potential to become a major problem if not managed early.

Other key projects that are helping achieve the Newcastle 2030 environmental objectives include the Living Streets program, adoption of the Blackbutt Plan of Management, preparation of the Stockton Beach Sand Scoping Study and Newcastle Coastal Management Study and Plan, and the adoption of the City-wide Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan that will guide future flood management activities and investment across Newcastle.

Council has commenced a new initiative in respect to developing a Water Sensitive Vision for the city that will provide future direction on how we manage water within our urban environment.

Focus on reducing potable water consumption and carbon pollution has been maintained with the implementation of the Carbon and Water Management Action Plan. This work includes initiatives within the residential, education and business sectors as well as with Council operations.

The Newcastle community has continued to demonstrate a commitment to efficiency with a reduction across the local area in electricity usage and related emissions over the past 12 months. While the reporting period did include an unusually cool summer and a reported reduction in the use of air conditioning, a downward trend is evident in the graph illustrating monthly electricity usage since January 2010.



Source: Ausgrid

Positive achievements have also been made within the Newcastle area with significant increases in domestic waste diverted from landfill recorded over the past 12 months. Part of this result is attributable to the three waste bin program introduced by Council in 2012. Residents have well utilised the lime green lid bins for green waste collection while the new 140 litre red lid bins are used for weekly general waste collection and the yellow lid bin for recyclables collected fortnightly.

Community Indicator	Progress	Trend
Domestic waste diverted from landfill	42% domestic waste diverted from landfill 2011/2012; an increase from the previous year	→
Household water usage	Current household water per household unavailable	⊖ Data not available
Household electricity usage	Average daily consumption 16.2kwhrs per household 2010/2011; reduction from the previous year (Ausgrid)	→
Air quality	Daily Regional Air Quality Index in the Newcastle area exceeded 100 units (indicating poor air quality) on only one day during 2011	→
Canopy cover	Analysis of LIDAR data required	⊖ Data not available
Coastal water quality	2011/2012 Beachwatch rated water quality at all 11 swimming locations in the Newcastle area as good or very good	→
Migratory shorebirds	Decline in numbers in the Hunter Estuary since 1990 benchmarks (Hunter Bird Observer Club)	←
Greenhouse gas emission from electricity use	746,979 tonnes carbon emissions 2011/2012; decrease in emissions from the previous year (Australian National Greenhouse Accounts)	→

→ Progressing towards community outcome; ⊖ No observable trend; ← Moving away from community outcome.

Migratory Shorebirds

The Hunter Estuary is the most important site in NSW for both the diversity and abundance of shorebirds. This estuary is internationally recognised for the migratory shorebirds who use the complex mosaic of estuarine habitats for foraging and roosting. Most species arrive during spring after a marathon flight from their northern hemisphere breeding grounds. They stay up to seven months before flying north to breed again in remote areas of Siberia, Mongolia and Alaska. This arduous journey, across open sea and international boundaries, makes migratory shorebirds especially vulnerable to disturbances and accordingly most are listed as protected under various international, federal and state environmental legislation.

Long-term monitoring of the migratory shorebird populations since the 1970s by the Hunter Bird Observer Club indicates that there has been a drastic decline in most species. If this trend continues it is predicted that within 25 years many will not appear at all. Much of this decline is ascribed to human-induced habitat destruction, both overseas and within the Hunter Estuary, and ongoing development within the estuary will exacerbate the environmental problems further. Protection and enhancement of the Hunter's remaining estuarine habitats and ongoing monitoring of the shorebird population are vital if such trends are to be reversed.

For more information on migratory shorebirds visit the Hunter Bird Observes Club website www.hboc.org.au.



Waders Stockton Sandpit

Photography by Chris Herbert



Vibrant and Activated Public Places

In 2030 we will be a city of great public places and neighbourhoods promoting people's health, happiness and wellbeing.

Community Outcomes

Community outcomes we want to see for our Vibrant and Activated Public Places include activation by all age groups, a range of arts, music and cultural destinations and events, and safe and vibrant city and neighbourhood centres. We want social wellbeing through active and healthy communities and well-planned public places with suitable amenities and high quality public and community art. We want Newcastle to continue to be known for its emerging and established artists with high levels of creative activity and expression. We want intergenerational activity that comes with community access and ownership of public space and to see community pride in the city's heritage and culture.

To achieve these outcomes over the next 10 years our strategic objectives for Newcastle are:

- Public places that provide for diverse activity and strengthen our social connections
- Culture, heritage and place are valued, shared and celebrated
- Safe and activated places that are used by people day and night.

Making Progress

We love our Coast! In partnership with the NSW Land and Property Management Authority and Hunter Surf Lifesaving, Council is undertaking a long-term improvement and management program for coastal assets. In

2010 Council endorsed the Newcastle Coastal Revitalisation Masterplan. Work contributing to achieving the Community Strategic Plan objectives include cliff stabilisation at Bar Beach, car park and promenade renewal at Merewether and detailed public domain planning. One of these detailed plans is for the 6km Bathers Way linking Merewether Ocean Baths to Nobbys Beach. The plan proposes an upgrade of the Bathers Way to provide comfortable pedestrian and cycle access for diverse recreational uses along the coast including wider shared pathways, more shade and seating, and viewing areas.

Following public exhibition and comment, the Bathers Way Public Domain Plan was adopted by Council in August 2012. This and other coastal revitalisation works will be achieved over the next 10 years as one of the special rate variation projects.

Since 2010 three of Council's 10 skate parks have been upgraded including Empire Park at Bar Beach which is now identified as one of the most diverse and progressive skate facilities in the country. The park also features batball courts, seating and shade areas. The facility has already attracted national and international events as well as enthusiastic use by Newcastle locals. The Maryland and Wallsend skate facilities have also benefited from upgrades incorporating new skate areas, furniture, refuges and shelter areas that encourage social engagement and allow for parents and the wider community to share the parks.

Playgrounds and parks are also key public places strengthening our community wellbeing and connections. At Blackbutt Reserve a new regional playground has been built with the help of funding from the Australian Government's Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program. The playground located in the Carnley Avenue Reserve boasts a bowerbird theme. Additional upgrades at Blackbutt Reserve will be funded under the special rate variation program.



Active play is happening at the water playground developed at Lambton Swimming Centre. The new aquatic playground includes a centralised play structure with large tipping bucket, water jets, concrete splash pad and water slide. A major upgrade of the Lambton Swimming Centre will be undertaken as part of the special rate variation funded civic projects.

The annual Sports Partnership Program enables Council to provide funding to sporting groups, organisations and Park Committees in the Newcastle LGA to assist with minor capital works projects. The funding is provided on a dollar for dollar basis with a maximum grant of \$5,000 and can be used for projects such as pathways, canteen renovations, fencing, park drainage, irrigation and cricket screens.

A major redevelopment was completed over the last 12 months at National Park No. 2 Sportsground. The work transformed the sportsground into a venue with the capacity to attract medium scale regional and interstate sporting activities. The venue has been designed to accommodate cultural and community events ranging from outdoor cinema, youth concerts and Christmas carols through to outdoor community celebrations. The Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations supported the redevelopment with grant funding of \$2 million.

The project has acted as a catalyst for tourism and economic development, created direct and indirect jobs, showcase environmental initiatives, contributed to revitalisation of the west end of Newcastle CBD and is supporting

healthy lifestyles through sports participation and diverse social and cultural activities.

In line with the objectives outlined in the Community Strategic Plan, initiatives such as the successful local Livesites program activates the city's public spaces while stimulating economic outcomes. Livesites has also become a major contributor to the development and sustainability of Newcastle's creative industries.

To assist in the provision of a safe and active city, Council in collaboration with the State government, police and health organisations have discussed with the community initiatives for increasing public safety, particularly at night. The top priorities identified were public safety, providing a mix of night-time activities and appropriate levels of transport. One of the outcomes of these discussions is the Alcohol Management Strategy 2010-2013 developed to assist in creating a diverse nighttime economy with hospitable and safe entertainment areas, reduced alcohol-related violence and reduced anti-social behaviour and vandalism.

Areas in Hunter Street are set for further improvements under the Hunter Street Revitalisation Masterplan and with funding from Council's special rate variation. The masterplan sets out key themes and priority actions to deliver economic, social, governance and environmental improvements to the vitality of Hunter Street. Priorities include activation via community events, cleanliness, plant biodiversity, street scaping and transport access.

Place Making

Council has committed to incorporating the principles of place making in the design process for public domains and village centres.



Place making principles include:

- Creation of safe, vibrant and welcoming public places and neighbourhoods where people feel a strong sense of ownership in their community and a commitment to making things better
- Facilitation of active participation by community stakeholders in the use and development of public places at the early planning stages of projects
- Development of public places that reflect community and cultural values, needs and aspirations, and that work well for people
- Creation of public places that feel safe for all including the most vulnerable in the community.

'Our Laneway Park' Community Project Fletcher Street Reserve, Adamstown

Community Indicator	Progress	Trend
Adequacy of good quality parks and recreation areas	72% residents agreed (2008 Council Community Survey)	⊖ Data not available 2012
Adequacy of natural areas for pursuit of leisure time activities	90% of residents agree (2009 Hunter Valley Research Foundation Wellbeing Survey)	⊖ 2012 data not yet available
People attending community events in Newcastle	121,280 attending L!vesite events 2011/2012	→
Satisfaction with heritage conservation in Newcastle	30% residents were satisfied reflecting a decline in satisfaction (2012 Council Community Survey)	⊖
Cultural participation	351,775 attending events and exhibitions 2011/2012 (Council facilities)	⊖ Established as baseline
Perception of safety in public areas around Newcastle	30% residents agreed public areas were safe (2008 Council Community Survey)	⊖ Data not available 2012
Crime rates	4,157 offences recorded occurring outdoor/public place 2011 (NSW Bureau of Crime Research and Statistics)	⊖ No observable trend

→ Progressing towards community outcome; ⊖ No observable trend; ⊖ Moving away from community outcome.



Caring and Inclusive Community

In 2030 we will be a thriving community where diversity is embraced, everyone is valued and has the opportunity to contribute and belong.

Community Outcomes

Community outcomes we want to see in our Caring and Inclusive Community include appropriate access to community-based services, lifelong learning opportunities and growth in community gardens and farmers markets. We want a city where people know their neighbours, volunteer their time and skills to help others, and actively participate in creating a healthy, more informed and culturally rich community.

To achieve these outcomes over the next 10 years our strategic objectives for Newcastle are:

- A welcoming community that cares and looks after each other
- Active and healthy communities with physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing
- A creative, culturally rich and vibrant community.

Making Progress

Social isolation and homelessness are major challenges identified in the Community Strategic Plan. The Newcastle and Hunter Homelessness Interagency Network highlights the barriers and creates opportunities to facilitate appropriate responses and services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. It aims to provide a coordinated community and multi-agency response to homelessness. Council partners with the Interagency on initiatives such as the

Homeless Connect Day, providing free services, information and contact opportunities for individuals and families. In addition, the Newcastle Region Library has modified membership requirements to ensure homeless and at risk people are not excluded from using library services and facilities.

The provision of library services in Newcastle is linked more broadly to a significant population in the Lower Hunter under the Newcastle and Hunter Co-operative Library Agreement. This is an example of an efficient and effective regional network between Newcastle, Port Stephens, Dungog and Gloucester Councils. Newcastle and Lake Macquarie Councils' Library Services also work together producing an extensive program of events and activities enriching the lives of community members.

Newcastle has continued to promote a creative and culturally rich community with programs such as Short+Sweet Newcastle and the 2012 Newcastle Short Story Award. These are supported by Council working in partnership with community focused groups such as the Hunter Writers Centre and L!vesites.

Specific projects for youth are developed at The Loft Youth Arts and Cultural Centre and funded in partnership with government and non-government organisations. During 2011/2012 the Aboriginal youth arts program delivered a series of skills development workshops in film, visual arts and music, and

an arts workshop program conducted in partnership with Castle Personnel for young people living with a disability. The Loft Youth Arts and Cultural Centre takes workshops and programs to young people throughout the whole LGA with its mobile outreach van and multimedia equipment.

Encouraging cultural awareness and pride, the Newcastle Museum opened in August 2011. During the Museum's first 12 months it has welcomed 180,000 visitors, inspired and engaged over 130 school groups from around the Hunter and sponsored the 2012 Wandiyali Wonnai Art Gallery associated with the Wandiyali Out of Home Care youth support service.

As the custodian of one of NSW's most substantial public art collections outside capital cities, the Newcastle Art Gallery's exhibition program has been extensive and varied. The value of the growing collection to the community has been evidenced by the substantial contributions from individuals, groups and all levels of government to enable the redevelopment of the Art Gallery.



The Commonwealth government Regional Development Australia fund is also contributing to the redevelopment.

Important participants in many of the community based activities in Newcastle are the volunteers. July 2012 saw the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Volunteer Gallery Guides who demonstrate their commitment to the wider community by enriching the experience of so many visitors to the Art Gallery. During that month the Guides also supported the Art Gallery in hosting over 10,000 visitors during the first three weeks of the Archibald Prize exhibition.

Community Indicator	Progress	Trend
Social support	1% of adults unable to find support from family or friends in times of need (2009 Hunter Valley Research Foundation Wellbeing Survey)	⊖ 2012 data not yet available
Australian Early Development Index	9% of kindergarten students in the LGA estimated to be vulnerable on two or more developmental domains 2010	⊖ 2012 data not yet available
Volunteer participation rates	16% participation rate (2011 Census first release data)	⊖ No observable trend
Sense of community	58% of residents agree their neighbourhood has a strong sense of community (2009 Hunter Valley Research Foundation Wellbeing Survey)	⊖ 2012 data not yet available
Wellbeing Index	Score of 75 where 1 indicates low and 100 indicates high wellbeing (2009 Hunter Valley Research Foundation Wellbeing Survey)	⊖ 2012 data not yet available
Companion animal ownership	56% ownership (2009 Hunter Valley Research Foundation Wellbeing Survey)	⊖ 2012 data not yet available
Satisfaction with local arts, entertainment and culture	62% residents were satisfied reflecting an increase in satisfaction from the previous survey (2012 Council Community Survey)	⊕

⊕ Progressing towards community outcome; ⊖ No observable trend; ⊖ Moving away from community outcome



Liveable and Distinctive Built Environment

In 2030 we will live in an attractive city that is built around people and reflects our sense of identity.

Community Outcomes

Community outcomes we want to see in our Liveable and Distinctive Built Environment include walkable neighbourhoods with green spaces and a wide range of affordable housing choices supported by multipurpose facilities. We want a balance between retaining heritage and new developments that promotes our unique local culture and provides connections between the city, harbour, foreshore and beaches. We want to see vibrant, safe streets, energy efficient buildings and a built form that achieves an attractive and productive city.

To achieve these outcomes over the next 10 years our strategic objectives for Newcastle are:

- A built environment that maintains and enhances our sense of identity
- Mixed-use urban villages supported by integrated transport networks
- Greater diversity of quality housing for current and future community needs
- Best practice energy and water efficient buildings and infrastructure.

Making Progress

The updated Newcastle Local Environmental Plan 2012 (LEP) was gazetted in June 2012. The LEP helps achieve the development goals identified in the Community Strategic Plan by reducing possible conflict between

adjoining land uses and planning for adequate land to meet the diverse needs of our sustainable city. The current LEP considers local social, economic and environmental needs while reinforcing the importance of the existing centres within the city including the city centre and suburban business districts.

Preservation and promotion of built heritage within Newcastle is also supported by the LEP which includes 691 heritage items, six heritage conservation areas and the inclusion of 12 archaeological sites. A further 37 items are listed on the State Heritage Register. Work is underway on the development of the Cathedral Park Masterplan. This project is being jointly funded by all three levels of government including grants of over \$378,000.

Council has commenced discussions with the community to develop the Newcastle Local Planning Strategy. This strategy will update the previous Urban Strategy and provide a platform to move towards our shared vision for Newcastle. The Community Strategic Plan includes a number of objectives and strategies that specifically relate to land use planning. The Local Planning Strategy will respond to these and balance competing land uses, ensuring that Newcastle remains a robust, dynamic and resilient city. During the development of the Local Planning Strategy it is anticipated that the State Government's review of the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy will also be finalised and released.

The provision of affordable housing meeting a variety of household needs continues to be a focus as the population and demographic mix within Newcastle shifts. In July 2012 Council resolved to sell the former Wickham Public School to the Samaritans Foundation for a nominal amount for long-term use as a facility to accommodate homeless and/or at risk young people who have made a commitment to engage in ongoing tertiary education or training opportunities.

The former Wickham School is one of the assets managed by the Council's Building Better Cities Housing and Development Committee (BBC). A central objective of the BBC Committee is the revitalisation of inner Newcastle through the provision of rental housing opportunities with an emphasis on sustainability and affordability. Following the sale of the former school the remaining BBC funds will be used to deliver affordable housing projects during 2013/2014.

In 2010 the BBC Committee allocated \$2 million in funding for another innovative housing model that provides short and

medium term accommodation for homeless people supported by a range of appropriate service agencies. The 'This Way Home' project was completed in 2011 in partnership with Housing NSW and Compass Housing and has been acknowledged as leading the way in NSW in terms of affordable housing outcomes and financial autonomy.

Council continues to encourage the implementation of sustainability principles in the development of new homes and improvement of community assets through building guidelines and the ClimateCam program.



Community Indicator	Progress	Trend
Satisfaction with neighbourhood	91% of residents were satisfied (2009 Hunter Valley Research Foundation Wellbeing Survey)	⊖ 2012 data not yet available
Listed heritage items	691 heritage items in Newcastle Local Environmental Plan; 37 items in the State Heritage Register; increase from 2010 listing	→
Reasons for living in neighbourhood	25% of residents nominated proximity to services such as shops, recreation facilities and schools (2009 Hunter Valley Research Foundation Wellbeing Survey)	⊖ 2012 data not yet available
Agreement that a range of housing types needed is available in the local area	79% residents agreed (2008 Council Community Survey)	⊖ Data not available 2012
Homes with solar photo voltaic systems installed	3,828 systems connected December 2011 (Ausgrid)	→
The City of Newcastle potable water consumption against 2020 targets	Data not available	⊖ 2012 data not yet available

→ Progressing towards community outcome; ⊖ No observable trend; ⊕ Moving away from community outcome.



Smart and Innovative City

In 2030 we will be a leader in smart innovations with a healthy, diverse and resilient economy.

Community Outcomes

Community outcomes we want to see in our Smart and Innovative City include smart energy and contemporary communications services across Newcastle with sustainable regional employment based on an educated and skilled workforce. We want continuous cultural activity across the city, distinctive suburban commercial centres, strong business growth and a mix of small and large business activity for a dynamic local economy. We want to see growth in attainment of training and tertiary education outcomes as well as an increase in tourist accommodation and length of stay by visitors to the city.

To achieve these outcomes over the next 10 years our strategic objectives for Newcastle are:

- A vibrant diverse and resilient green economy built on educational excellence and research
- A culture that supports and encourages innovation and creativity at all levels
- A thriving city that attracts people to live, work, invest and visit.

Making Progress

Significant research and trial projects are occurring across Newcastle aimed at the development of new technologies and services within the green energy sector.

The CSIRO Energy Centre at Mayfield is home to the National Solar Energy Centre. Recent funding for projects include for the development of solar-hybrid fuel, carbon power capture and storage, and solar-driven air-conditioners

The Smart Grid, Smart City program in the Newcastle region by Ausgrid has built significant momentum since it was launched in 2010. Forty red flow storage battery systems and 25 gas fuel cell systems have been installed in households. In addition, thousands of advanced smart meters have been installed that will communicate through a new WiMax system across the city enabling households to have feedback on their energy usage in real time.

Council has also collaborated with the Hunter Business Chamber and Hunter TAFE in a successful \$1.2 million grant with the Australian Government Energy Efficiency Information Program designed to help small to medium business across the Hunter to reduce their energy costs and carbon footprints. The rollout of this program will commence in September 2012 with 500 businesses being offered real time electricity displays and a range of educational products.

Innovation in creativity and business development is progressing with *Renew Newcastle* continuing to find short and medium term uses for buildings in Newcastle's CBD that were vacant, disused, or awaiting redevelopment. With support from Council

and the arts and business communities, *Renew Newcastle* assists artists, cultural projects and community groups to use and maintain these buildings until their initiatives become commercially viable or the buildings are redeveloped. There are currently more than 30 projects activating these otherwise empty spaces featuring local creative enterprises.



In 2011 stakeholders from across the city contributed to the development of a Newcastle brand which subsequently was nationally recognised by jointly winning its category at the Government Communications Australia 2012 Awards. The award recognises the contemporary shift from separate branding for tourism, business and community sectors to a broader, more inclusive brand.

Since May 2011 Newcastle has hosted over 30 major events bringing approximately \$61 million into the Newcastle economy in combined overnight and day visitor spend. Increasingly, Newcastle is seen as an ideal location to hold world-class events such as Australian Rugby Union test matches, music festivals and community events. In June 2012 it was confirmed that Newcastle will host the 2013 Special Olympics Asia - Pacific Games. This event will see 1,700 Special Olympic athletes, 600 coaches, 4,000 volunteers and 200,000 spectators from 25 nations across the Asia Pacific region enjoying the event and experiencing the vibrancy and diverse culture Newcastle has to offer.

Community Indicator	Progress	Trend
Research projects undertaken for the green economy	Baseline to be established 2012	⊖ Baseline data to be established
Skills in green economy	2,301 enrolments in Hunter Institute TAFE NSW courses generating skills in occupations contributing to a green economy 2011	⊖ 2012 data not yet available
Growth in creative industry occupations	1,904 enrolments Hunter Institute TAFE NSW courses generating skills in creative industry occupations 2011	⊖ 2012 data not yet available
Growth in business tourism	\$ 8,099,326 value spend retained in the region for annual confirmed bookings through the Newcastle Convention Bureau 2011	⊖ Baseline data
Economic growth from commercial developments	Baseline to be established 2012	⊖ Baseline data to be established
Occupancy of major short term accommodation	75% average occupancy rates of major short term accommodation reflecting increase from previous year	⊕

⊕ Progressing towards community outcome; ⊖ No observable trend; ⊖ Moving away from community outcome.

Open and Collaborative Leadership

In 2030 we will have a strong local democracy with an actively engaged community and effective partnerships.

Community Outcomes

Community outcomes we want to see with Open and Collaborative Leadership include high levels of community participation in identifying and achieving local and regional priorities. We want to be an informed and empowered community with open, accountable and democratic leadership supporting ethical and robust decision-making and a resilient civil society. We want a highly skilled Council workforce delivering community focused outcomes and improved service delivery that balances customer expectation, value of service and organisational capacity to deliver and provide sustainable local governance.

To achieve these outcomes over the next 10 years our strategic objectives for Newcastle are:

- Integrated, sustainable long-term planning for Newcastle and the Region
- Considered decision-making based on collaborative, transparent and accountable leadership
- Active citizen engagement in local planning and decision-making processes and a shared responsibility for achieving our goals
- The City of Newcastle: a local government organisation of excellence.

Making Progress

In 2011 the NSW Government established the Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund (HIIF) to enhance local infrastructure, support economic growth and enhance the liveability of the region. The HIIF is preparing a Hunter Region 20 Year Infrastructure Plan setting out the long-term infrastructure priorities in the region based on five, 10 and 20-year increments.

This plan will inform recommendations for the \$350 million fund to be allocated over four years and provide an ongoing framework for future investment. In July 2012 the NSW Government put out the first Call for Proposals for local community priority based projects to be undertaken by State agencies and local councils in partnership with private sector organisations. Projects are already underway in the areas of transport, health and education.

Council undertakes a wide range of programs that promote community leadership in partnership with agencies, business groups and community organisations. The Place Making Policy was adopted on 17 April 2012 and commits Council to early engagement with the community and other stakeholders in planning and improving public places, before the drafting and exhibition of strategic documents such as masterplans or designs.

Make Your Place
Community Projects 2010 - June 2012

57 projects
614 people directly involved
\$68,916 Council grant funding
\$192,662 community in-kind contributions

At Blackbutt Reserve an active volunteer program assists with maintaining this important community facility. This program encompasses work experience students on a weekly basis, with interests in tourism and captive animals.

The Loft Youth Arts and Cultural Centre works across the city and with the Newcastle Youth Council to provide opportunities and build capacity with young people. In 2012 Newcastle Youth Council was an organising partner with Lake Macquarie Youth Council in delivering the State Conference of Youth Councils. This conference provides young people the opportunity to attain new skills and knowledge aimed at helping them run their own Youth Councils or committees more effectively.

Youth Council was an active participant in Youth Week, Bounceback (an exhibition in partnership with Hunter New England Area Health and Newcastle Community Arts Centre), Hunter Homeless connect, Rainbow Visions, and YEAH (Youth Empowered Against HIV Aids). The Loft also provides opportunities for Council to work with young people on issues important to the city.

Council adopted the City Engagement Charter in February 2012. This charter guides how The City of Newcastle engages with the community. The Newcastle Voice community reference panel is one of the ways in which this happens.

Newcastle Voice was developed in 2008 to consult and engage with the community through workshops, face-to-face meetings, quick polls and surveys. It actively encourages people to participate in community engagement activities which assist in identifying what is important to the community, planning services to meet the community's needs and expectations, and creating better governance through open and collaborative engagement. The panel currently consists of 2,700 members many of which have identified contributing to the Newcastle community, creating a better city and support for community involvement and grassroots democracy as key reasons for joining.

Business Excellence

The Australian Business Excellence Framework (ABEF) is an integrated leadership and management system that describes the elements essential to sustainable organisational excellence. Council uses the tools of ABEF to improve processes and integrate a culture of continuous improvement into normal business operations. Council is implementing ABEF throughout its operations.

Recent examples of the application of ABEF within Council include:

- The development of The Way Ahead; the General Manager's path for Council to be a local government organisation of excellence
- Benchmarking activities against other organisations to identify opportunities for process and outcome improvements
- Ongoing documentation of Council processes to standardise and improve outcomes for the community.

Both Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework and ABEF underline the importance of Council's long-term planning to aid decision-making, problem solving and to guide future action.

Community Indicator	Progress	Trend
Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund projects in the Newcastle LGA	Fund commenced in 2011; baseline data not available	⊖ Baseline data to be established
Membership of local community organisations	Baseline to be established 2012	⊖ Baseline data to be established
Opportunity to express views on community issues	80% of residents believe they do have opportunity to express their views (2009 Hunter Valley Research Foundation Wellbeing Survey)	⊖ 2012 data not yet available
Business Excellence score	232 (2012 Council Organisational Health Check)	⊖ Previous assessment undertaken in 2009 not comparable
Overall City of Newcastle performance	34% of residents rated Council's overall performance as adequate, excellent or good (2012 Council Community Survey)	⊖ Not comparable with 2008 Community Survey due to question change
Council has a reputation as a good employer	48% residents agreed (2008 Council Community Survey)	⊖ Data not available 2012

→ Progressing towards community outcome; ⊖ No observable trend; ← Moving away from community outcome.

Next Steps

This report will inform the review and development of the next iteration of Integrated Planning and Reporting documents to be adopted by Council in June 2013 as required by the *Local Government Act 1993*.

The State of the City Report will also be incorporated into Council's 2011/2012 Annual Report.

Following the local government elections in September 2012 the legislation requires that the current Community Strategic Plan be reviewed and the planning period rolled forward to maintain a minimum 10-year timeframe. Council will also be required to review and update the other documents in the planning framework including the four-year Delivery Program. This process will commence in the last quarter of 2012 and is required to be completed by June 2013.

The Newcastle 2030 process will further the ongoing discussion about how we can best continue to respond to the strategic objectives outlined in the Community Strategic Plan and the actions required to achieve the identified community outcomes.

Key to this discussion will be an increased awareness of the Community Strategic Plan, understanding of our shared goals and the development of partnerships to support implementation.

Work will continue on the development and monitoring for the community indicators discussed in this report. This will support our ability to track our progress and the effectiveness of the strategies we take in moving forward towards our long-term vision.

